

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of February 5, 2014

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Nichols at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 5, 2014, in the City Council Chambers, 25541 Barton Road, Loma Linda, California.

Commissioners Present: John Nichols, Chairman
Miguel Rojas, Vice Chairman
Carolyn Palmieri (arrived at 7:05 p.m.)
Ryan Gallant

Commissioners Absent: Nikan Khatibi

Staff Present: Konrad Bolowich, Assistant City Manager
Richard Holdaway, City Attorney
Guillermo Arreola, Associate Planner

Chairman Nichols led the Pledge of Allegiance. No items were added or deleted; no public participation comments were offered upon invitation of the Chairman.

PC 14-06 – SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 13-037, ZONE CHANGE (ZC) NO. 14-011, PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN (PPD) NO. 14-012, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) NO. 13-028 , VARIANCE NO. 13-054 , TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 13-038 – A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE EAST VALLEY CORRIDOR SPECIFIC PLAN FROM EVC-SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO ACCOMMODATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 46,718 SQUARE FOOT MARKETPLACE WITH CONVENIENCE STORE, GAS STATION, CAR WASH, AND SEPARATE COMMERCIAL BUILDING PAD, AND A 75-FOOT HIGH FREESTANDING SIGN, ON 1.07 ACRES OF LAND LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF MOUNTAIN VIEW AVENUE, INTERSTATE 10 (I-10), AND ROSEWOOD AVENUE

Chairman Nichols introduced the item and opened the Public Hearing. Associate Planner Arreola presented the staff report into evidence, indicating the proposed project encompassed a convenience store, gasoline service, automated car wash and separate commercial building pad. There would be no alcohol sales. Included were various requests – a Specific Plan Amendment and Zone Change to change the site designation from East Valley Corridor Single Family Residential to East Valley Corridor General Commercial; a Precise Plan of Design and CUP for the operation of the gasoline service station and free-standing sign; a variance to allow the free-standing sign and to increase the height from 40' to 75' and a reduction in the interior property landscaping requirements; and a tentative parcel map to consolidate from 6 to 2 lots. The underlying General Plan designation is commercial, which includes all the residential properties to the south up to Redlands Blvd. The applicant, consultant and traffic engineer were available to address concerns of the Commission.

Questions and concerns from Commissioners included:

- Due to the size of the requested sign in relation to the lot size, perhaps a Master Sign Plan be contemplated, allowing the sign to be utilized by future businesses in that area;
- That the requested landscape Variance to allow for the use of a smaller percentage of interior property line landscaping did not reduce the overall landscaping required;

- Confirming the requested Zone Change would allow the gas station, thereby eliminating the need for the Conditional Use Permit;
- Concern that the approval of the Sign Variance would prompt requests from other businesses;
- Groundcover indicated as gravel, perhaps some thought be given to some other drought-resistant plant options similar to the Barton Road median;
- Some landscaping in the proposed median versus strictly hardscape as it is a gateway to the City and should make more of an impact;
- Concern about traffic circulation, the right turn only from Rosewood onto Mountain View Avenue created the need for a U-turn at the Mountain View Avenue and Business Center Drive traffic signal and the left turn lane from northbound Mountain View Avenue traffic onto Rosewood;
- Delineated pedestrian access to the project at the southeast corner of the project as pictured in the proposed plans directed pedestrians into the vehicle travel path; that perhaps moving that accented pedestrian access to the north of the Mountain View Avenue driveway delineating the pedestrian path of travel directly to the convenience store portion of the project;
- Pad for future development and landscaping/parking concerns.
- Leakage from the gas tanks getting into the water supply at the City well site adjacent to the project.
- Lights from cars exiting onto Rosewood after dark and the headlights shining into the homes across the street.

Applicant and staff responded:

- Potential for sign to have space for future development; amendment of Conditional Use Permit would come before the Commission for review and approval. The purpose of the variance is to find conditions unique to this site; one of those being the close proximity to the off-ramp.
- Overall amount of landscaping is not reduced, just distributed throughout the site.
- Groundcover is crushed gravel, with number of shrubs and brush. It would be difficult to put plants instead of crushed gravel; applicant agreeable to use of drought-resistant groundcover.
- The Zone Change changes the zoning to match the existing General Plan, and would thus require a conditional use permit per the East Valley Corridor Specific Plan.
- Left turn pocket from Mountain View Avenue to Rosewood was reviewed and approved by the Public Works Department pursuant to the traffic study.
- Applicant was agreeable to move the delineated pedestrian access to north of Mountain View Avenue access nearer to the convenience store.
- Pad for future development would include additional parking and landscaping upon development.
- The double-wall fiberglass gas tanks almost never have any leaks and even the smallest amount of leakage from the gas tanks is detected immediately, the station is shut down and appropriate agencies are notified. In addition, the City wells pull from the deepest aquifers and, theoretically, if a leak were to happen, would be in the top layer and not work its way to the very bottom layer.
- The headlights from the exit on to Rosewood would be directed for a very short time between the houses across the street, not directly into either one.

Mr. Marwan Alabassi, project applicant, introduced Dan Haskins and Steve Ritchey, project engineers. He indicated that while the freeway sign seems large, to attract vehicles from the I-10 freeway, the height is necessary and he welcomes the opportunity for the sign to accommodate future businesses. He is agreeable to the landscape changes to drought resistant groundcover. The lack of landscape in the median was a requirement of the City. The right-turn only from Rosewood on to Mountain View Avenue was the only viable option. The signal at Mountain View Avenue and Business Center Drive allows for a U-turn and is supported by the traffic study. The U-turn at Business Center Drive was for vehicles only, tanker

trucks would use an already approved truck route along Redlands Boulevard to either California Street or Anderson street to return to the freeway. Discussion ensued between the applicant and Commissioners regarding issues outlined above.

Mr. Alabassi continued, providing a brief background of the project that started with the purchase of the parcels in 2006 and a number of obstacles overcome over the ensuing 7 years. His team has worked with City staff, taking the original design through several revisions to what was presented this evening. He has a construction company and owns several shopping centers and gas stations that are doing well. His hope was to get a recommendation for approval for the project from the Planning Commission.

Chairman Nichols invited comment from the public.

Steve Rice, 10413 Spade Dr., Loma Linda addressed the Planning Commission and indicated his concerns were with the increased traffic and the possibility of vehicles using Spade Drive to Sun Avenue as an alternative route back to Mountain View Avenue. It has been a quiet neighborhood, with children playing and he was concerned for the safety of the existing residents.

Mr. Alabassi indicated a willingness to install left-turn only signage at the exit on to Rosewood to help address the concerns expressed by Mr. Rice.

Dick Wiley addressed the Planning Commission regarding possible future traffic increasing from Norton (the closed Air Force base to the north) and the Amazon Warehouse, left turn access to and from the project and the proposed median.

Chairman Nichols summarized discussion thus far:

- Consideration of participation in a master sign plan for the freeway sign in conjunction of development on adjacent parcels as an integrated center;
- Modifying landscaping to include drought resistant groundcover instead of gravel;
- Moving pedestrian link from the corner to walkway leading to the convenience store, balanced on the south of Mountain View Avenue driveway;
- Consideration of low maintenance landscape in the median;
- Bring back a design that shows the traffic patterns;
- Interior landscaping at the pad for future development in the interim;

Associate Planner Arreola asked for clarification from the applicant as to the anticipated use of the future pad; was it to be demolished or left “as is” until future development?

Applicant responded that the pad currently has one house and his intent is to leave the house, cleaned and remodeled for use as a construction office. He is willing to increase the proposed landscaping. He is also willing to demolish the house if it becomes necessary.

Project Engineer Dan Haskins, Land Engineering Consultants, addressed the Commission. Due to time constraints and pressures put on the development over time, the applicant would like to get a vote tonight, whether to recommend approval or denial and would be willing to accept the additional conditions regarding landscaping; Public Works and Staff again review the intersection of Mountain View Avenue and Rosewood to make sure it complies with the traffic impact study and meets Caltrans Division of Highway Standards for turning movements as it is not an ideal intersection.

Commissioner Rojas stated that he would prefer to see the revised plans prior to recommending approval. City Attorney indicated that the project will go to City Council for further review. Staff can work with the applicant to incorporate Planning Commission recommendations to present for City Council

consideration. Conditions that have been discussed can be added and the project could move forward to City Council.

Motion by Nichols to recommend approval of staff recommendation of Specific Plan Amendment 13-037, Zone Change 14-011, Precise Plan of Design 14-012, Conditional Use Permit 13-028, Variance 13-054 and Tentative Parcel Map 13-038 with the added conditions as noted above.

Motion died for lack of a second.

Motion by Nichols to continue the Public Hearing Specific Plan Amendment 13-037, Zone Change 14-011, Precise Plan of Design 14-012, Conditional Use Permit 13-028, Variance 13-054 and Tentative Parcel Map 13-038 to the March 5th Planning Commission meeting with applicant to address the concerns of the Commission.

Applicant requested that the project not be continued.

City Attorney commented that the applicant has the right to appeal not only a decision, but to also appeal an action to continue the item. The Planning Commission can move to not approve and that can be appealed to the City Council at that point. The Commission also has the right to continue the item if it believes there is a legitimate basis for a continuance, that some modification or changes brought forward would be worth considering that may lead to an approval rather than delaying the denial.

Motion on the floor seconded by Rojas, and failed. Palmieri and Gallant opposed, Khatibi absent.

Motion by Nichols to deny the project.

City Attorney suggested a modification to consider forwarding to City Council with a recommendation that it not be approved. He also indicated that the traffic issues, median landscaping and funds to maintain are policy decisions for City Council.

Motion by Palmieri, seconded by Rojas to forward the project to the City Council with the recommendation that the project not be approved and carried. Nichols opposed, Khatibi absent.

City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated that staff would work with the applicant to address the issues brought forward by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Palmieri indicated that she appreciated the efforts that have gone into the project and the applicant's willingness to work with staff; the problems that need solving she believes are beyond the purview of the Planning Commission and need to be addressed at the City Council level.

REPORTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Vice Chairman Rojas asked about the building currently under construction at the Centerpoint property and that it looked significantly different from what was approved. Assistant City Manager responded that the only changes were minor and amounted to a change in location of the doors. Approved was a large, single tenant building with a second building to the west with 7 or 8 shops which is not yet under construction, but is in the plan check process. A Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market will occupy the large

tenant space and for the shops adjacent, it was his understanding that discussions are underway with Subway, Starbucks and Native Foods.

REPORTS BY STAFF

None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes approved at the meeting of April 2, 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "B. Nicholson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a period after the first name. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Barbara Nicholson
Deputy City Clerk